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Executive Secretary

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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Executive Registry

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November 8, 1984

MEMORANDUM TO DISTRIBUTION LIST A

FROM: OTTO J. REICH *OJR*

SUBJECT: Quotations on Sandinista Elections

Enclosed are three compilations of quotations on the November 4 elections in Nicaragua. These could be of use for discussions on the Sandinista elections.

(1) Statements by Sandinista officials such as Daniel Ortega and Tomas Borge. These statements are indicative of the Nicaraguan leaders' attitude toward elections and the purpose of their elections--the legitimization of the Sandinista regime.

(2) Statements by foreign diplomats critical of the elections. For example, Carlos Andres Perez, former President of Venezuela and Vice President of the Socialist International, has made several statements concerning his disappointment with the type of elections the Sandinistas had scheduled.

(3) Reports and editorials from newspapers in Latin America should be of particular interest in the United States. The press in Costa Rica, Nicaragua's neighbor, has been extremely critical of the Sandinista elections.



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STATEMENTS MADE AFTER SANDINISTA ELECTIONS

New York Times editorial, November 7, 1984:

"Only the naive believe that Sunday's election in Nicaragua was democratic or legitimizing proof of the Sandinistas' popularity. The result was ordained when opposition parties tamely accepted terms that barred them from power."

Luis Esteban Rey (Member of Venezuela's House Foreign Relations Committee and Foreign Affairs Advisory Committee; Political Affairs Columnist), Venezuela's El Diario, November 4, 1984:

"There doesn't exist [in Nicaragua] the necessary atmosphere to guarantee a truly democratic result from the elections....It is certain who will win: The Sandinistas....The impression exists that there had not been an environment of full freedom to promote candidates and programs as in other countries."

Aristides Calvani (former Venezuelan Foreign Minister), El Diario, November 4, 1984:

"These are not elections in the sense that we understand them, and they lack any democratic validity. Their objective is to consolidate power with the Sandinistas. Elections without opposition and without liberty are not elections."

Marcos Falcon Briceno (former Venezuelan Foreign Minister and former Ambassador to the U.S.; also President, Foreign Affairs Advisory Committee), El Nacional, November 4:

"I don't believe that these could be truly democratic elections. They are apparently looking for a type of legitimacy, for international acceptance, and, of course, internal [legitimacy]. But ... I don't believe this [election] deals with a true democratic contest."

Eduardo Gonzalez Romero (Vice President of the Venezuelan Chamber of Deputies Foreign Policy Committee; recently returned from trip to Nicaragua), Daily Journal, November 4:

"The Sandinista government has not provided the minimum guarantees of participation for the parties in the democratic coordinate and other political movements in Nicaragua."

Madrid's Diario 16 (independent, center-right), editorial:

"The elections which are being celebrated today in Nicaragua have one fundamental problem: The democrats are not participating. It is not enough to celebrate elections for a country to be democratic...."

Spain's Catholic Ya (conservative) commentary:

"The elections which are being celebrated today in Nicaragua, under a state of emergency, without an electoral census and without documentary control of voters, do not offer any guarantee of impartiality. Those who believed in the possibility of a democracy, fruit of a union of the different progressive factions which formed the guerrillas and fought against Somoza, now feel themselves justifiably defrauded...."

The following quotations are taken from reports in the two pro-Sandinista dailies, Barricada and El Nuevo Diario

Friedrich Koenig, Austrian Christian Democratic Deputy:

"The desired pluralism does not exist. I have found that there is a large discrepancy between what is practiced and what is said in the electoral law.

"For example, when Leonel Arguello (of the supreme electoral council) visited Vienna, he told us that press censorship would soon be lifted and we see that it still exists. I accept that there is censorship when it deals with security but not when it is censorship of anti-government criticism because that is what the opposition does.

"I am sorry that freedom of the press does not exist in Nicaragua, because there is censorship and often it has nothing to do with security. That censorship I have seen in the paper La Prensa. Therefore I regret that the elections could not be representative for all of the political forces in the country.

"I also fear that after the elections not much will change....I do not say that there is a communist system in Nicaragua but that there are many signs that Nicaragua is moving toward that system and for that I am very sorry."

Felix Pedro Espinosa (Political Secretary of the Nicaraguan Conservative Party):

"...I saw some 20 people at some voting places, others were empty. I believe that the elections were a failure, perhaps because the people had a lack of confidence."

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Ramon Ariuzu Martinez (member of the Nicaraguan Popular Social Christian Party):

"The Popular participation was about the same as the abstention. If we take into account that the Nicaraguans got up early to do their duty, then what we have before us is a generalized abstention or an inexplicable apathy."

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STATEMENTS ON ELECTIONS BY NICARAGUAN OFFICIALS

Comandante Daniel Ortega, official radio station Voz de Nicaragua, October 22, 1984

(statement made after Independent Liberal Party (PLI) withdrawal from the electoral campaign)

Even if we have to go by ourselves we are going ahead with the elections on the 4th of November, and no matter what we will ratify the popular will and support the revolutionary process with the FSLN at its head.

Comandante Tomas Borge interview on Bulgarian Television aired in Cuba on September 13, 1984

When asked about the upcoming elections in Nicaragua, Borge candidly admitted their objectives:

- 1) "advance the institutionalization of the revolution" and
- 2) "eliminate yet another pretext for intervention by the Reagan Administration."

Comandante Bayardo Arce, secret speech before the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN), quoted in Barcelona's La Vanguardia on July 31, 1984

If we did not have the U.S. imposed state of war, the electoral problem would be totally outdated in terms of its usefulness. What a revolution needs is action. Action is precisely what constitutes the essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat....

* * *

...democracy as they call it, bourgeois democracy, has an element we can manage and even derive advantages from for the construction of socialism in Nicaragua.

* * *

...do we have strategic differences with the PSN or does the PSN have them with us? With that approach, we see things a little more substantively and would ask whether the time hasn't come to make the party of the revolution stronger, to gradually form a single party. Why are we Communists going to be wearing different shirts if real, concrete socialism is being constructed in the power strategy of the Sandinista Front?

Comandante Daniel Ortega, La Prensa, December 5, 1983

Never will the power of the people be overthrown--not with bullets and not with votes.

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Comandante Jaime Wheelock, Barricada, November 28, 1983

Either there will be a Revolutionary Sandinista Nicaragua or there will be no Nicaragua at all.

Sub-Comandante Rafael Solis, La Prensa, December 24, 1981

...the elections in Nicaragua will not be to contend for power but to strengthen the revolution.

Comandante Humberto Ortega, Speech, August 24, 1981

...but we have not committed ourselves to the elections they think we are going to promote, and we never--we have said this on other occasions speaking for the Directorate--never will we allow power to be disputed.

Comandante Humberto Ortega, Barricada, August 24, 1980

These will be our elections. Remember that they are elections to reinforce power, because the people hold the power through their vanguard party, the Sandinista National Liberation Front and its National Directorate.

Comandante Humberto Ortega, Barricada, July 11, 1980

Our people already voted on July 19, 1979, with weapons in their hands and the blood of 50,000 Nicaraguans. They voted for themselves, for Sandinismo.

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QUOTATIONS IN THE MEDIA ON SANDINISTA ELECTIONS

Washington Post Editorial, November 1, 1984

The Sandinistas once hoped to legitimize their rule by elections, but those they are running Sunday, five years after taking power, will resolve nothing. Their Marxist-Leninist side showed through, and the democratic opposition, faced with a measure of harassment that prevented fair campaigning, withdrew.

Bishop Pablo Antonio Vega of Nicaragua, New York Times, October 24, 1984 front-page article

Don't our people have more than enough experience voting without being able to change any of the situations that afflict them?

Free expression means being able to say yes or no, not just yes.

Colombia's leading daily El Tiempo, October 24, 1984 editorial

The withdrawal of the Liberals from the campaign and from the elections of November 4 in Nicaragua restricts to the maximum the representativeness of this election and of course puts another difficulty in the path of democratic normalization in Central America. Already the parties and groups that supported the candidacy of Arturo Cruz had put in doubt the sincerity with which the Sandinistas are complying with their commitment to free voting, expressed before and after the overthrow of Somoza.

Costa Rican La Nacion, October 23, 1984 editorial titled "The Illegitimacy of a Process" (Editorial is in response to withdrawal of Partido Liberal Independiente (PLI) from electoral process.)

The PLI [Independent Liberal Party], which was considered favorable to the Sandinistas, has decided to withdraw from the process because they believe there are no real guarantees for the celebration of the elections. Their presidential candidate, Virgilio Godoy, has called for a national dialogue to seek those guarantees. With this decision, besides the FSLN, there only remain the Socialist, Communist, PSC, and Movimiento de Accion Popular to present a facade of pluralism, which, with the withdrawal of the PLI, has been totally dissipated.

Costa Rican La Republica editorial October 23, 1984 titled "The Mask Slips"

...Two weeks before the election day, Dr. Virgilio Godoy clipped a new piece off the mask of liberty and democracy with which the Sandinistas have tried to conceal the real face of the totalitarian farce to take place November 4th. In addition, the emergency conditions they have prolonged until April, 1985 will let them maintain a brutal political repression over the country; the false elections will occur in this framework.

* * *

Godoy [PLI leader]...has been a minister of the Junta Sandinista for four years. If he now refuses to participate in the masquerade, it is out of shame over continuing to appear as part of the farce.

Luis Esteban Rey (Venezuelan columnist), October 12, 1984, edition of El Nacional

One must also take into account what is going to be, finally, the elections. The agreement which was about to take place a few days ago in Brazil between Arturo Cruz, of the Coordinadora Democratica, and Comandante Bayardo Arce, with Carlos Andres Perez and Willy Brandt as witnesses and virtual intermediaries, failed because Bayardo opposed consultations by Cruz with other Coordinadora parties in Managua. We do not understand, really, this position of the Sandinista comandante.

Arturo Cruz, Op-Ed, Washington Post, September 28, 1984

Last week on four successive days in four different cities, my followers and I were physically harassed by Sandinista mobs as we tried to meet indoors with our organizers. The mobs (or turbas) brandished steel clubs and machetes. I, myself, was hit in the face with a rock, spat upon and grabbed by the hair. To my shock, the international press headlined these incidents by referring to Sandinista "police protection." They failed to report that this "protection" arrived three hours late in Leon. And it goes without saying that such "protection" would be unnecessary if the government was not organizing mob violence against us.

By now it should be obvious that our insistence on minimal electoral conditions was not to provide a "pretext for withdrawing" but rather to ensure that my countrymen can express their political will. The justice of our demands has been confirmed by their support by the Socialist International, Spain, Costa Rica, El Salvador and the Contadora group. As a result, the Sandinistas have been forced to yield formally to some of our demands lest they forgo any international credibility.

Front-page of September 20, 1984, edition of Costa Rica's La Nacion

The leader of the Coordinadora Democratica Nicaraguense (CDN) and proposed Presidential candidate was hit by a stone in his left temple. The blow, although it caused no serious wound, did draw blood. The incident took place yesterday afternoon in the city of Leon, 90 kilometers west of Managua. Dr. Arturo Cruz, together with other opposition leaders, was meeting with 300 supporters in a closed building. As they met, groups of militants belonging to the "turbas divinas" (the shock troops of the regime) began to collect in the vicinity, carrying clubs and chains, and menacing anyone who tried to leave.

European Democrat Union (EDU) report on Nicaragua's Electoral Process, September 1984 (Nicaraguan Government invited EDU for fact-finding mission)

The preparations for the elections and the country's political climate being what they are, free voting by individual citizens cannot be expected. The EDU mission has arrived at the conclusion that in this context the demands of the Coordinadora are fully justified--leaving aside the general amnesty and the dialogue with the armed opposition; without a realisation of these demands free elections are not possible; on the contrary, it is the rejection of the demands which is an important indication that free elections are not intended.

The elections are being shaped and exploited by the Government of Nicaragua to the end of consolidating its own power and of facilitating further measures on the road to a Marxist-Leninist regime. The government for these reasons cannot afford free elections because they would conjure up the serious danger of its losing the majority.

The Popular Social Christian Party (PPSC) in August 7, 1984, edition of La Prensa

We have not found any sign on the part of the ruling party or its organizations that they mean to honor in practice the guarantees they have offered.

Costa Rican La Nacion August 10, 1984, Editorial on the Preelection Conditions in Nicaragua

What the regime in Nicaragua is doing is exactly what always has happened in all communist regimes, but in different shades. In the case of the neighbor country, for reasons that are perfectly transparent, the elections are an effective

instrument to better the image of the regime, that is to say, to project to the outside world the appearance of a frank open democracy and even a return to the original proposition of the Anti-Somoza insurrection.

* * *

There will not really be freedom of the press, nor a right to strike, nor free issuance of the vote. The result of the ballot box has already been dictated by the regime.

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CRITICAL STATEMENTS BY FOREIGN LEADERS ON SANDINISTA ELECTIONS

Manuel Penalver, Secretary General of Venezuela's Accion Democratica (AD) Party, October 29, 1984 edition of El Universal (printed text from TV talk show "Impacto")

No Marxist-Leninist government can have free elections because it is a totalitarian system conducting elections with one party, one list. Only the naive can believe that this can change.

Van Den Broek, Netherlands' Foreign Minister, October 25, 1984 (remark about the desirability of Coordinadora participation in Nicaraguan elections)

[It would] "make the elections more pluralistic than is now the case, when no genuine opposition party is participating."

Carlos Andres Perez (former Venezuelan President and member of the Socialist International), October 23, 1984 edition of Venezuela's El Nacional

One of the gravest errors committed by the Sandinista Junta in the electoral process was not having assured the participation of presidential candidate Arturo Cruz of the Coordinadora Democratica, the most genuine representative of the opposition.

If there is no freedom of expression until the counting of the votes, the elections will not be genuine.

Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark's Foreign Minister, October 1, 1984 radio interview

We have some reservations that the elections which are now scheduled can be called free since the opposition has not been permitted to carry out an election campaign, since there has not been freedom of the press, and [in the absence of] all of the things which we believe are natural. But I have to say that I have been encouraged by conversations I had with the Nicaraguan Foreign Minister where he gave assurances that they are prepared to consider certain improvements in order to commence a peaceful development in the situation.

The question about a free election, that is a central question and there is the hope that Nicaragua will show its goodwill, for example, by postponing the election which is scheduled in a few weeks, inter alia, in order to give the opposition the possibility to participate. Such is a free election in the way we normally speak of it.

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Aristides Calvani (former Venezuelan Foreign Minister),
September 30, 1984 edition of Venezuela's El Nacional

The democratic parties' demonstrations are sabotaged and their leaders beaten. The structure of the so-called Sandinista Defense Committees, united with the disturbances and action by various state security police forces, are conducting psychological intimidation.

What the democratic parties are asking for is a crust of bread. They are requesting barely minimal conditions for the electoral process and a time extension for the elections. Venezuelans would never accept an electoral process under the existing conditions in Nicaragua.

Carlos Andres Perez interview in September 16, 1984, edition of
Venezuela's El Nacional

Unfortunately, I have been all along a very strong critic of the way in which the Sandinista regime has focused on this extraordinary initiative of calling elections on November 4th of this year....

Unless the Sandinista Junta modifies its conduct, I believe, the elections would unfortunately not open the path we all wish....

Edgardo Paz Barnica, Honduran Foreign Minister, Press
Conference on September 6, 1984

Question: Can there be free elections in Nicaragua without first having an internal reconciliation process?

Answer: It seems to me, and I am not trying to meddle in the internal affairs of other countries, that any country having a conflict as serious as the one you mentioned must hold dialogue between the government and its opposition without excluding anyone, in order to establish a climate of social peace that will permit the establishment of a democratic government through the electoral process.

Edgardo Paz Barnica, Honduran Foreign Minister, September 3,
1984 edition of Tiempo

Because of survival and conviction we desire free elections in Nicaragua....We want democratic governments for all countries, borne of free and honest elections. We honestly believe that the way Nicaragua is now the exact conditions do not exist for an alternative of this nature....We further believe in democracy as a way of life and government. We would desire for Nicaragua a democratic government emerging from

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free, honest, and internationally verifiable elections.... Honduras desires that in Nicaragua there exist a pluralistic, participatory, and representative constitution, not a red constitution nor a black constitution. Let the people determine their own destiny, without foreign interference of any kind, but with the necessary liberties to promote progress and social change through peaceful means.

Jose "Pepe" Figueres (three times President of Costa Rica) quoted in August 27, 1984 edition of La Prensa Libre

I was not in Managua this past July 19, because I felt cheated. Several times I advised the nine comandantes, pointing out to them the convenience of assuming a more pragmatic line and asking them to surround the electoral process with indispensable guarantees; they didn't pay me the least attention. I can see that it's difficult for them to start riding a bicycle without having learned beforehand. They are not conducting their revolution within the parameters that are acceptable for the rest of the region.

Roberto Galvez Barnes, Honduran Ambassador-at-Large for Economic Cooperation, June 30, 1984 edition of La Prensa

All political parties in Nicaragua should participate in the November elections. Nicaragua has reduced the voting age to 16 years old, hence it seems it should now revise its electoral law.

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